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'Nixon Dead, WW III On'

Bogus Alert Is Admitted

A bogus alert, saying the President had been assassinated and World War III declared, was transmitted on a regional Coast Guard teletype network while President Nixon was in China, the Coast Guard said here today.

In a statement issued in response to a question, a Coast Guard spokesman said the message was immediately recognized as fake, and all units quickly were de-alerted.

AN INVESTIGATION is continuing, the statement said, but the incident has been traced to a man who was standing watch in a small station in Texas. He is currently undergoing medical evaluation, the statement said. No names were given.

The statement said 22 units received the message, which came on a Sunday morning, the last day of Nixon's China trip.

"The gist of the message was that the President had been assassinated and that World War III had been declared by the vice president," the statement said.

"The message was immediately recognized as spurious at the district office (in New Orleans), verified, and the units on the net de-alerted.

"IN VIEW OF the seriousness of sending unauthorized messages of any nature on Coast Guard information circuits," the statement said, an investigation was launched to identify the perpetrator.

"As a result of this inexplicable, admitted behavior of committing such a grave offense, the man is presently undergoing medical evaluation.

"An investigation as required by the uniform code of military justice is also being conducted prior to initiating any charges."

No further details were given.